Journaling Assignment

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Taking a course in Psychiatric Mental Health Nursing is necessary to my nursing career, in both patient care and in my own life. Being a medical health professional, I will be exposed to traumatic experiences that may even trigger past trauma from my own life. So, it is important as I step into my nursing career to self-analyze and evaluate my own emotional needs to be fully prepared for my new career. In my personal experience I have worked as a secretary in a psychotherapy office, have received talk therapy personally along with my husband and my mother is a Licensed Professional Counselor.

In my experience with working alongside Licensed Professional Counselors, as their secretary, I have been exposed to some of the challenges that patients face when attempting to receive therapy. Scheduling conflicts can be a huge challenge for patients. It can be even more challenging when you include multiple people in your counseling sessions, such as in family sessions. Insurance can also determine which therapists you can see and how often you can go. Self-paying patients have an even harder time with going as often as they need to while maintaining a budget. So, with this in mind I know that patients who are not educated on the benefits of talk therapy might shy away from getting started.

Through my own experiences with mental health, I know that it has an effect on quality of life. Currently I have been learning to navigate major life changes, such as pregnancy and marriage. To which I could not navigate my feelings alone. For me, having support is a necessity in handling the ups and downs of life. Knowing this I will advocate for extra support in the clinical setting. Some resources I can recommend to my patients would include support groups, talk therapy, bible study groups (if applicable), and reaching out to loved ones that the patient feels they can rely on.

My concern stepping into the nursing role is the amount of sensitivity I need to use when therapeutically communicating to my patients. Mental health is a sensitive topic that lacks education in our community. This makes it hard to address and talk through trauma while allowing the patient to feel comfortable. My goal is to educate patients on mental health while being aware of the patient's attitude towards being educated. My plan to be successful in this is to think about my words before I speak. I hope in this module to learn how to make a safe environment for my patients so that they can be comfortable with me.

I would also like to learn about my own personal biases towards mental health. It is unbeneficial to ignore the fact that we each carry personal bias. These stereotypes often stem from what we are exposed to. In movies mental health is used in thrillers to entertain and amuse us. However, Bias in health care is a dangerous thing. Due to personal bias, people may not get the proper health care they need. The subtle part of biased thinking is that it often goes unnoticed by the person with the bias. From personal experience I know that bias can stem from lack of education or fear. So, to counteract this, my goal in this module is to self-examine how I view people. I want to have an open mind and be empathetic to the patients who open up to me.

My expectation for learning about psychology is to gain a deeper understanding of the way mental health affects others. To empathize with how others view situations and why they may respond the way they do. I also aim to gain therapeutic techniques in preparation to discuss mental health. Three questions I have that I would like to learn from this course are; When is medication needed and when is medication not a necessary intervention? What cues do I, as a nurse, need to recognize in my patients regarding their mental health? Lastly, what about my own mental health can I improve on to be the best nurse I can be?